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of doubtful or intrinsically worthless foreign pictures in this country. There is a chance for some valuable statistics here. For example, it would be interesting to know how many pictures attributed to Corot, Diaz, Daubigny, Troyon and Rousseau are owned in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston and New York.

### SOME FRENCH PORTRAITS.

OUR text is found in the following paragraph from the *New York Sun*:

"Mrs John W. Mackay recently sat for a portrait to Meissonier and paid him some fifteen thousand dollars for it. Her friends said it was a caricature, the newspapers criticised it severely, and Mrs. Mackay burned it. Mr. William H. Vanderbilt went to Paris and had his portrait painted by the same artist, and it hangs in the gallery of his palatial abode in the Fifth Avenue. If Mrs. Mackay's portrait was characterized by the same quality of disagreeable candor and unscrupulous truthfulness that Mr. Vanderbilt's picture discloses, there is nothing surprising in her having burned it."

Mr. Vanderbilt's portrait does not show him at his best; it rather exaggerates the least pleasing characteristics of his expression, and conveys the impression of a coarse, sensual man. It is not such a picture, we think, as would be treasured through generations as a "family portrait"—if treasured at all, it would be more on account of the man who painted it than the man who was painted.

But both Mr. Vanderbilt and Mrs. Mackay know well enough that Meissonier is not a portrait painter, and under the circumstances, it seems very evident that each of them patronized the artist more on account of his great reputation than through the desire to secure a truthful portrait. Under such circumstances we cannot sympathize with them if what has been painted is not thoroughly satisfactory. *The Sun* characterizes Mr. Vanderbilt's portrait as "truthful." It is not wholly truthful—though it is based upon truth, just as is caricature. Meissonier has painted a recognizable portrait of Mr. Vanderbilt, just as Keppler has drawn recognizable pictures of him for *Puck*, yet nobody would think of considering the latter as strictly truthful portraits. Truthful portraiture will not represent the person painted with more graces than he has, or with less, and will not simply take advantage of the strongest characteristics for the sake of producing a recognizable likeness. It should be its aim to represent the person painted in the best manner possible to show him at his best—his best mentally, morally and physically.

A French paper, in commenting upon the Meissonier-Mackay trouble, refers to the fact that M. Meissonier rarely undertakes portraits at all, and states that he particularly dislikes to paint portraits of women. Only at the most urgent solicitation of Madame Mackay, enforced by her well-known ability to pay whatever he might choose to charge her for the work, did M. Meissonier consent to undertake the portrait. During the painting of the picture, Madame Mackay praised various good qualities which appeared in it, but was never thoroughly satisfied with the likeness. The time for the Triennial Exposition came, and M. Meissonier wished to send the picture there, promising to retouch it later, at his leisure, after its return from the exhibition. The picture was sent and was criticised severely. Meisson-

ier, enraged at the criticisms, then maintained that the picture was an excellent one, and even refused the retouching which he had promised. Indeed, had he painted upon the picture after these criticisms, it would have appeared to the world as if he had recognized some reason in them and was willing to admit that he could be taught something by the critics! Madame Mackay, not satisfied with the picture or with the artist's refusal to fulfil his promises, at first refused to pay for it, and sought to have it returned to Meissonier's studio. There was a great deal of trouble, with threats of a legal process, and then M. Cabanel was called in, by the agreement of both parties, to decide the matter. M. Cabanel, without considering the question of the merit of the work, decided in favor of his colleague—that Madame Mackay must receive and pay for the work, since she had ordered it.

"But I do not want it; I ordered something good, and this is bad!"

"That is your opinion, but to others it may appear excellent. At any rate, it is signed, delivered, and you have it in your possession. You certainly cannot reasonably refuse to pay for it."

"But it displeases me horribly, this wretched picture."

"Agreed, but you need not look at it; you may turn it to the wall; you may hang it where you please."

These were the consolations offered by M. Cabanel. It is stated that Madame Mackay then paid the price demanded for the picture, and subsequently destroyed it, as she had a perfect right to do. If that is true, as the papers state it, Mrs. Mackay's experience was rather costly.

The Parisians, however, are disposed to consider it a great outrage that Madame Mackay dared to destroy a work of their much-worshipped master. The *Figaro* published a two-column leader on the affair, by M. Albert Wolff, the distinguished critic, who wrote:

"Foreign millionaires have rights to be received among us so long as they employ their wealth in purifying the artistic genius of France, and not in destroying its productions by axe blows. One might avenge one's self on his bootmaker by paying his bill and throwing the goods in the fire. But to treat in this fashion a great artist, an illustrious old man with an irreproachable artistic conscience, is to attack the genius of the country and its respect for the men who make it illustrious."

This article is said to reflect the feeling of Parisian society regarding the matter. The French artists, indeed, have been so stirred up by what they term the insult to French art and to a representative French artist, that they have tendered M. Meissonier a complimentary banquet to express their sympathy for him in the affair—though just why M. Meissonier needs any sympathy it is difficult to imagine, since he received his pay for the work. To our mind, it would appear that Madame Mackay should be the person deserving of sympathy, under the circumstances, if there were any sympathy called for, but we have already expressed the opinion that she deserves none.

A ridiculous feature of this affair is the fact that M. Arthur Meyer, Editor of the *Gaulois*, and a devoted friend of the Mackays, sent a challenge to M. Meissonier to fight a duel, on account of certain expressions which the latter made in regard to the portrait and to Madame Mackay.

Subsequently, on the ground that M. Meissonier was too old to fight a duel, the belligerant editor challenged Meissonier fils. M. Meyer, it is reported, is not unused to challenging his enemies, and he is said to be skilful with the sword and pistol; however, it is not seriously believed that the affair is to have a tragic termination or that any blood will be spilled over it.

The Parisian press has recently published some very curious articles defining the etiquette which should be observed by visitors to France, and French hospitality to foreigners is spoken of in such touching terms that one is almost led to forget that the foreigner is always charged from one hundred to five hundred per cent. more for everything than is asked of a Frenchman.

#### GOOD WORDS FOR OLD WINTER.

BY T. LACHLAN SMITH.

**T**O the majority of persons, especially those who live and toil throughout the year in the great towns and cities, the advent of the Winter season is anything but cheering. The glad anticipations that mark the approach of the sister seasons are sadly lacking. The bright Summer days are remembered with regret that they are gone, and there is an instinctive shudder at the lengthening wintry shadows, and a shrinking from that icy phantom

"Clothed all in frieze,  
Chattering his teeth for cold, that doth him chill,  
Whilst on his hoary beard his breath doth freeze;  
In his right hand a tipped staff he holds,  
With which his feeble steps he stayeth still;  
For he is faint with cold and weak with eld,  
That scarce his loosed limbs he able is to wield."

This is a picture of old Winter drawn for us as long ago as Spenser's time—to many, no doubt, as true to life as it was to the fancy of the writer of so long ago.

But though from the time of Spenser down, many an icy shaft has been hurled at the drear old figure, still he has not gone all lonely on his cheerless way, nor has he been without enthusiastic friends to sing his praises. Much, indeed, may be quoted in his favor—many a glowing picture presented of his short-lived reign, and many a pleasant time recalled of healthful sport or fireside merrymaking, in which this grim-visaged old fellow has taken his part as one, at least, who seemed to carry beneath his winter frieze a warmer heart than we are prone to credit him with.

At a much later day we have, from the pen of a less distinguished but equally well-known poet, a kindred picture to this of Spenser's, but one withal so different in its warmth of coloring and feeling of sympathy, that we do not hesitate to present it by way of contrast.

"A wrinkled, crabbed man they picture thee,  
Old Winter, with a rugged beard as gray  
As the long moss upon the apple tree;  
Blue lipt, an ice-drop at thy sharp blue nose;  
Close muffled up, and on thy dreary way,  
Plodding alone through sleet and drifting snows.  
They should have drawn thee by the high heapt hearth,  
Old Winter, seated in thy great arm-chair,

Watching the children at their Christmas mirth,  
Or circled by them, as thy lips declare  
Some merry jest, or tale of murder dire,  
Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night,  
Pausing at times to rouse the smouldering fire,  
Or taste the old October brown and bright."

But we are not compelled to travel all the way from Spenser down to Southey's time, among the poets, to find this genial spirit of discrimination. Take, for example, the winter song in Shakespeare's "As You Like It"—its every line a *motive* for a picture. How charmingly the great bard brings before us, in a few masterly touches, the varied pageantry of a winter's day in the landscape setting of that old Elizabethan period. There is a positive feeling of exhilaration in his lines; we feel the nipping air that is all about us; we follow through the whitened fields the footprints of yon burly hind, and there we see him in the sheltered lee of some rude cairn guarding his fleecy charge, and blowing on his nails to keep his fingers warm.

We see the white roofs of the cottages, peering over the wintry hedge-rows, where

"Birds sit brooding in the snow;"

the quaint old church—with its older trees about it, where on a cold Sunday,

"When all about the winds doth blow,"

you may well believe the cough contagious passing round the little congregation until it

"Drowns the parson's saw."

And the short service over, you may be sure that parson, squire and cottager alike all hurry homeward—even maid Marion scarce lingers on the snowy path for Tom to overtake her, or to show off her latest fineries before her cottage rivals. Perhaps to her, as to the old and gouty squire, the frosty air has little to recommend it, for she, at least, is not likely to forget the rude liberties it takes, when

"Milk comes frozen home in pails,  
And Marion's nose is red and raw."

Then comes the last but most genial of this series of suggested pictures, for they are but masterly outlines to be filled in by the imagination of the reader—the short, wintry day draws to its close. By the cheerful hall fire sits our genial old squire, and lying near him on the hearth, his nose resting on his outstretched paws, his sleepy eyes in deep content, blinking at the ruddy flame, is his old and favorite hound. Handy by him he sees the bowl of smoking lambswool, with the roasted crabs hissing hot from the embers bobbing on the surface; the warm glow falls in a genial circle all about the old knight's chair, and while he sips, he listens to the wind without; he hears the merry note of the owl from its perch among the old red chimneys—he notes the various evening occupations of his household, the merry quip, the song or laugh that passes round; he thinks of winters past, and of the Christmas festivities in his hall; in the red embers of the glowing fire he builds no castles for the future, but rebuilds the structures of the past from the memories that fill his mind. He is content